

"PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN EXCLUDED FROM THE BOUNTY OF OUR NATION'S RESOURCES. MINORITIES WITH DISABILITIES IN PARTICULAR HAVE BEEN THE MOST DISENFRANCHISED OF THE DISENFRANCHISED IN OUR SOCIETY." - Rev. Jesse Jackson National Rainbow Coalition

The quality of life has greatly improved for people with developmental disabilities across the nation. Michigan has closed many state institutions where people with disabilities were often housed with no hope for the future.

Today, people with disabilities have input on the way they will live their lives. Self-determination and self-advocacy have made it possible for people with disabilities to achieve their full potential and no longer rely on the government to manage their lives. However, all is not perfect.

Facing Barriers

Persons with disabilities face many barriers that prevent full participation in their communities. The problem is even more acute and severe for minorities with disabilities. Statistics indicate they have a higher incidence of disability, fewer jobs, less education and lower incomes than those in the majority with developmental disabilities.

The barriers include:

1. Limited access to information in one's native language;
2. Failure of service systems to understand specific cultures;

3. Failure on the part of service systems to reach out to the population; and
4. Lack of trust.

The Multicultural Committee of the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council was established to ensure that the Council and all its activities are more ethnically responsive and culturally appropriate. People with disabilities from multicultural populations have the right to access, and participation in, the same activities.

Improving access and participation is achieved through outreach efforts, building alliances, and working to eliminate the barriers that frequently prevent culturally-diverse people from becoming involved in self-advocacy.

The Committee addresses these barriers by educating the Developmental Disabilities Council and its committees and work groups about the values of cultural competency and diversity. The Committee also works toward increasing the diversity of Council membership, related groups and programs.

Committee Outreach

Currently the Multicultural Committee is targeting outreach to Arab Americans and Chaldeans,

African Americans,
American Indians,
Asian Americans and
Hispanic/Latino(a)
Americans.

Members of these communities have described specific barriers that prevent them from becoming involved in advocacy efforts. The Multicultural Committee hopes to reduce and remove such barriers, with the help

of new members from these communities.



Please Consider Joining Us!

If you are committed to working toward greater cultural awareness and respect among persons with disabilities and the programs that serve them, please consider joining the Multicultural Committee of the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council. Please contact us at 517-334-6123, or write to us at: DD Council, 1033 S. Washington Ave., Lansing, MI, 48910.

Multicultural Committee

Our Community Includes Everyone



**Michigan Developmental
Disabilities Council**



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